

Daily Family Devotions

The thought begins in the Bible verse;
please take the time to read it first.

FRIDAY

"COLOR ME GRAY"

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 1; Luke 11:23 Matthew 7:13-14

Have you noticed how society cries today, not for men who dare to stand alone, but for men who cautiously try to straddle the line between one extreme and the other, between black and white - offending no one: gray men.

Are you tempted to be a "gray man"? Gray has the quality of fading into a background; it never stands out - it goes with just about everything.

Do you feel this way at school or on campus, at the office, the club? Do people think of you as 'comfy gray'?

What color would you describe Paul or Jesus Christ? Anonymous? No; today Paul and Christ would be two of the most irritating figures of the time. They were unequivocal; uncompromising, unswervable. Not militant; merely firm and confirmed, not rummaging around in search of 'truth'.

Nor were they concerned with the direction of the mainstream of public opinion, knowing that the masses had never followed God's leading and never would. Christ never permitted his life to be determined by the pressure of compromise around him.

When you come under uncomfortable criticism from even your so-called Christian friends, do you willingly yield ground and float down the stream with the going current, or do you dare to stand on the Rock of your commitment to your Lord?

Prayer: God, help me to wear the color of pure Christian commitment rather than the safe camouflage of gray. Please let me live in such a way that men may know I am yours. AMEN

SATURDAY

"FOR GOD, OR PEOPLE?"

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 6:24
Romans 12:1-3; 14:13-18

Has there ever been a time in your life when you felt Jesus Christ asked you to compromise a portion of belief - either an ideal or principle for the sake of a person?

Some people have actually believed that he led them into a spiritual compromise in order to win souls.

It is too easy, isn't it, to listen to "nice" people urge us into all varieties of compromise; it is never for a wrong reason. It is always so that we do not "hurt someone's feelings" - or embarrass someone else or make people think we don't approve if we will not join them.

All of these things *seem* to indicate selfless motive - but are these compromises *really* selfless? Or are we rationalizing out of a desire to merely be accepted as "nice" rather than Christ's?

We must constantly be on guard against that which deflects us from serving God and tempts us to serve men instead. If Jesus Christ braved the ridicule of the Pharisees - then he would also be braving the indignation and petulance of our "nice" compromisers today.

Do you really, in all things, try to serve God? Or do you still sometimes slip furtive offerings to the popularity and esteem of men?

Prayer: Teach me, dear Lord, that to serve you is a continuous attitude - not just a whim. Make me more than a "nice" person; make me a positive, effective reflection of my Lord. AMEN

MONDAY, MAY 27, 2024

"OBSTACLE OR ANCHOR?"

SCRIPTURE:
Deuteronomy: 32:31-34
Matthew 7:24-28

When we trip, it is always on the obstacle which lies too shallow - not on those things which are buried deep.

In life, there are numerous things which are shallow convictions - areas on which you don't place much importance: the places you go for entertainment, the things you do for recreation, the clothes you wear, people you associate with, the way you talk, your whole social attitude. Most of us give these shallow objects very little thought. But what a lot of tripping and falling they can cause in our Christian testimony.

And often we can't understand why these things should be able to trip us. They seem so insignificant. Teenagers say, "It doesn't matter, Dad, it's only a word, a place to hang out," and a questionable, even rather inconsequential event suddenly becomes to us a real threat, spiritually.

For a Christian who is used to the solid rock of real Christian commitment, this soft sand with its hidden obstacles call prove to be an exhausting experience. As we grow older and time and energy become more precious, we realize the fewer obstacles we have the more effective and less exhausting that life can be.

Prayer: Lord, I want to live a life so free of unnecessary objects that life will be a journey securely laid upon the solid rock of your will. Help me to continually sift the hidden obstacles from my life which would trip me and cause me to fall and fail. AMEN

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TUESDAY

"A GENEROUS PORTION OF LOVE"

SCRIPTURE:

I John 4:4-8

There is a legend of a rare jungle herb which when mixed with a second herb becomes a marvelous healing potion. But if that second ingredient is omitted, the rare herb causes excruciating pain and sometimes death.

There are Christian qualities that can react like that: words like fundamental, pure, unmoving once held certain approval. But now sadly we tend to relate them to severity and black-hatted disapproval. Why?

If Christian principles are not accompanied by an equal portion of love they do seem to poison rather than benefit others. The reason Jesus was so successful in applying his powerful, spiritual challenges and criticisms is because his love was so strong, and so penetrating nothing he did harmed people; it always healed.

As you develop stronger Christian traits, be sure you develop an equal portion of love. Always remember that everything we do - in fact our reason for being - is that God may be glorified and our Lord Jesus held up for men in his most compassionate and his loveliest. Our whole aim in life must be to woo men to him - not poison men against him.

Each day, before you begin, dedicate your best to him and ask him to remove all pride and self-righteousness from your life.

Prayer: Gracious Lord, of all those qualities of grace we remember you for, that of love stands out strongest. Help me, too, to love others as you did, I pray. AMEN

WEDNESDAY

"COMPROMISE -- CONVICTION WITHOUT BACKBONE"

SCRIPTURE:

II Peter 1:10
II Timothy 4:3-5

Sometimes the most insidious enemy of our Christian ideals can be an easy-going, good-natured friend who believes in "going along with the gang" or compromising for the sake of being a "good sport", to keep from "rocking the boat". "Why be a kill-joy? You'll never get people interested in you if you don't go along with them."

Is this true? Do we stand to win or lose when we compromise?

Apparently the thought never entered Jesus' mind. When he was challenged by the letter-perfect Pharisees, he did not hesitate a moment or make any effort to placate them or "keep peace". As he stood before Pilate, he had no intention of compromise even though it meant his life.

Compromise could only have hindered his work and testimony.

Don't *we* usually compromise because we want to belong to the crowd ... because we don't want people to think us bad sports - because we are not sure enough to realize that we don't have to compromise to be more right than we already are if we are faithful?

Compromise is the way to popularity but notto spiritual power. All of us at some time must make the choice, as Peter, Paul, John and others once made theirs.

Prayer: Dear Lord, help me not to be afraid to confirm my faith - not just compromise it. Give me your strength, I pray. AMEN

THURSDAY

"WHEN YOU FEEL INADEQUATE"

SCRIPTURE:

Psalm 103:13
Romans 8:26-29

How many times have you been faced with comforting someone who has just gone through an experience you can hardly imagine, something so heartbreaking and crushing that you can scarcely think of anything to do.

The contemporary authors claim the only way to write authentically is to "live life" in all its hellholes and degradation, its passions, its hurts.

But the Christian life has unique power, a peculiar ability. The man or woman who has turned his heart over to the Spirit of God, who is literally "run by the Spirit", has the true ability to feel and experience vicariously that which he may never have to actually live.

Therefore, when you are called to the side of someone who has just gone through a personal Golgotha, open your mind, your heart, your entire being to the love of God, to the compassion of Jesus Christ and the wisdom and articulation of the Holy Spirit. Understanding and love, strength and comfort will flow *through* you, not from you and you will find yourself, too, richer by this service to our Lord and to your friend.

Never hesitate to go when you are called - but never venture without at first emptying yourself of doubt, and filling up the vacuum with God.

Prayer: God, I want to serve you. Let me be an instrument of comfort and a vessel of love, an arm of strength to any who have need of you. AMEN